

PART II

Population

Where Washington's People Live

Because of the influences of topography, climate, accessibility and recent industrialization, Washington's population is distributed unevenly throughout the state. Over two-thirds of the people live in the western portion, concentrated largely in the industrial cities of Puget Sound. The Olympic Mountains and Willapa Hills of the Coast Range and the Cascade Mountains stand out as sparsely populated areas in western Washington. The Willamette-Puget Sound Lowland, extending from Vancouver on the Columbia River northward to Bellingham near the Canadian border, is the major population belt of the state. It contains a fairly well-distributed rural population on its river deltas and rolling, glacial drift plains.

The mountains, hills, plateaus, irrigable valleys and dry climatic conditions cause a generally clustered pattern of population settlement in eastern Washington. Mountainous areas including the eastern Cascade Mountain slope, the Okanogan Highlands, the Blue Mountains, and the Selkirs have but few people. Dryland and upland areas which cannot be irrigated, such as large portions of the Waterville Plateau, the Channelled Scablands and the hills of Yakima County, are thinly settled. Both rural and urban population is concentrated in the irrigated Yakima, Kittitas, Wenatchee, Okanogan and Walla Walla Valleys and in the Pasco and Quincy Basins. In the far eastern section--the Palouse Hills--the uniform soil, topography and moderate rainfall permits a more evenly distributed population. The industrialized Spokane metropolitan area and the rich agricultural Yakima Valley are the major population clusters of eastern Washington.

Growth of Population

Washington was explored by Spanish, Russian, British and American expeditions between 1592 and 1805, but no settlement occurred until 1810. Ownership of the area was disputed by America and Great Britain. A compromise, the Joint Occupancy Treaty of 1818, permitted both American and British fur traders and settlers to live north of the Columbia River. British interests (the Northwest Company and the Hudson's Bay Company) established fur trading posts at Spokane and Walla Walla in 1810 and 1818. American claims were strengthened by the Lewis and Clark Expedition (1804-1805) and by the settlements at Fort Spokane, Okanogan, and Astoria by the Pacific Fur Company. The British increased their influence as they established agricultural settlements at Fort Vancouver and Fort Misqually between 1824 and 1833. Settlement by Americans north of the Columbia, although permitted by treaty, was discouraged by the Hudson's Bay Company which desired to maintain its fur trade monopoly.

A growing tide of American land settlers over the Oregon Trail during the 1840's changed the balance of control in favor of the United States. Most of the Americans settled in the Willamette Valley of Oregon. Unhindered by the British, several hundred American settlers moved northward across the Columbia into the Puget Sound country and soon outnumbered the British fur traders.

The conflict of interests was solved by the Oregon Treaty of 1846, which gave the United States the present area of Washington and established the Canadian boundary as it exists today. Oregon Territory (including all of the present state of Washington) was created in 1848 by Congress, with its capitol in Salem, Oregon. Settlers north of the Columbia met in 1851 at the Monticello Convention in present Longview, Washington, and asked for a separate territorial government. Washington Territory was created March 2, 1851, with a capitol at Olympia on Puget Sound. Isaac I. Stevens was appointed as Governor.

Population growth was slow before 1860. Lack of roads, the long distance from the East, and the difficulty of clearing the dense forests of the Puget Sound country kept immigration to a minimum. Indian hostility prevented settlement in most of eastern Washington prior to 1858, and that tended to slow movement into the Puget Sound Basin. The Washington population was only 11,594 according to the 1860 Census.

In 1863, the Washington territorial boundaries were changed to the present state lines by the creation of Idaho Territory. The Census of 1870 was the first to follow the present boundaries, and it enumerated a population of 23,995.

Population grew rapidly from 1870 to 1890. New transcontinental railroads brought large waves of immigrants from the East and Europe. The completion of the Union Pacific to the Columbia River brought new settlers into southeastern Washington. When the Northern Pacific reached Spokane in 1880 and was continued on toward Puget Sound, settlers occupied the Palouse and Big Bend wheat lands and the Yakima Valley. In 1883, six new counties were created in eastern Washington. Expansion of coastwise shipping and lumbering built up the cities on Puget Sound and at Grays Harbor. Washington Territory was admitted to the Union as a state in 1889. The population at that time was 350,000.

The period 1900-1910 was a decade of rapid growth in which the state gained 624,000 persons, more than doubling to 1,141,990. Two other railroads, Great Northern and Chicago, Milwaukee and Saint Paul, reached Puget Sound in 1893 and 1909, respectively. The lumber industry and agriculture supported more people; land and timber seekers homesteaded free public domain lands in the mountainous areas. The Alaskan gold rush doubled Seattle's population within a decade. Railroads and ships brought large numbers of people from Europe, who took up lumbering, fishing, mining, and agriculture. Ranked numerically according to the 1920 Census, the largest foreign-born groups in the state were Canadians (42,000), Swedes (35,000), Norwegians (34,000), English (23,000), Germans (22,000), Italians (18,000), Finns (12,500), Russians (11,000) and Irish (9,000).

Between 1910 and 1940 population grew at a slower but steady rate. The increase was about 20,000 per year. The lumber industry began to decline after 1929. Reduced employment and a growing scarcity of land were reflected in a slower rate of population growth. However, during the 1930's, many farmers from the Great Plains drought areas moved overland to Washington seeking farming opportunities.

The 1940-1950 decade brought the greatest increase in Washington history. Primarily an overland movement of laborers to new defense industries, it resulted in an increase of 642,772 in ten years, raising the state population to 2,378,963 in 1950. Most of the new growth was in the industrial metropolitan districts in King, Pierce, Kitsap, Clark and Spokane Counties and at the Federal atomic works in Benton County.

Urban and Rural Population

In 1870 the entire population of Washington was living in rural areas—in villages and on farms. By 1900, 211,477 of the population of Washington, or 40.8 percent, were living in urban areas. In 1950, according to the Census definition of "urban" which includes residents of towns of 2,500 and larger, 1,503,166 persons, or 63.2 percent, were living in urban areas. And over 52 percent lived in three standard metropolitan areas comprised of Seattle, Tacoma, Spokane and their surrounding suburban cities and towns. This trend follows the national pattern.

Table 1.— Population of Washington
1860-1955

Year	Population
1860	11,594
1870	23,955
1880	75,116
1890	357,232
1900	518,103
1910	1,141,990
1920	1,356,621
1930	1,563,396
1940	1,736,191
1950	2,378,963
1955	2,580,000

Sources: U.S. Census, Population;
Washington State Census
Board, April 1, 1955
Estimate.

Bellingham (35,700), Everett (34,100), Bremerton (42,000), Walla Walla (25,400) and Longview (23,500).

Population of Chelan County

In 1955, Chelan County ranked fifteenth among Washington counties with an estimated 42,000 inhabitants. Population has grown steadily since the Census of 1900. With considerable commerce and manufacturing located at Wenatchee, the county seat and the only urban area, the population is over 38 percent urban. In 1955, an estimated 16,250 persons were classed as urban, all living within the city limits of Wenatchee. About 62 percent of Chelan County's people were rural, living in cities or villages under 2,500 in population, or on farms. The 1950 rural-farm population of 8,990, ranked Chelan eleventh among the thirty-nine counties in that respect.

The rural population is predominantly rural nonfarm, consisting of 602,026 persons who live in the country, but do not operate farms. The rural farm population decreased about one-fifth between 1940 and 1950, and numbered only 273,771, or 11.5 percent of the state's total 1950 population of 2,378,963. As a result of the farm-to-city trend in Washington, about one person in ten is living on a farm and about six persons out of ten are living in a town or city larger than 2,500.

According to the 1955 estimates of the Washington Census Board, the ten leading cities of Washington ranked as follows: Seattle (555,000), Spokane (182,000), Tacoma (156,000), Yakima (43,000), Vancouver (41,950),

Table 2.- Population of Chelan County
1900-1955.

Census Year	Population	Percent Rural	Percent Urban
1890 ^{1/}			
1900	3,931	100	0
1910	15,104	73.2	26.8
1920	20,906	69.8	30.2
1930	31,634	63.2	36.8
1940	34,412	66.2	33.8
1950	39,301	66.8	33.2
1955	42,000	61.3	38.7

^{1/} No census data prior to 1900. Chelan County was established in 1899.

Source: U. S. Census, Population.

There are six incorporated places in Chelan County. With the exception of Wenatchee which has been gaining with each Census, the towns have remained stable with small changes in population since 1930. Cashmere, Leavenworth and Chelan have increased by a few hundred. Entiat and Lakeside populations are nearly the same size as in 1930. Wenatchee has shown a vigorous growth, acquiring new residents within its limits and new residential additions. It has gained 4,600 people since 1930.

Table 3.- Population of Incorporated Places
Chelan County, 1910-1955.

Incorporated City or Town	1910	1920	1930	1940	1950	1955 ^{1/}
Cashmere	625	1,114	1,473	1,465	1,768	1,772
Chelan	682	896	1,403	1,738	2,157	2,125
Entiat	--	--	--	--	420	400
Lakeside	222	199	238	241	288	287
Leavenworth	1,551	1,791	1,415	1,608	1,503	1,626
Wenatchee	4,050	6,324	11,627	11,620	13,072	16,250

^{1/} Populations for 1955 are estimates of the Washington State Census Board, April 1, 1955.

Sources: U.S. Census, Population.
Washington State Census Board.

Chelan County has had a considerable number of foreign immigrants as well as a large number of native-born American settlers from eastern, southern and midwestern states. In 1920, about 8.5 percent or over 8 persons out of 100 were born in Canada or Europe. Canadians have been the largest foreign-born group, followed by Germans, English, Swedes and Norwegians. In addition to the European and Canadian nationalities the population of 1950 included 59 Negroes, 54 American Indians and a small number of Chinese and Japanese.

Table 4.- Foreign-Born White Population, Chelan County
1920 and 1950

Country of Birth	1920	1950
England and Wales.....	186	153
Scotland.....	61	46
Northern Ireland.....	--	1
Ireland (Eire).....	60	28
Norway.....	119	77
Sweden.....	123	75
Denmark.....	44	50
Netherlands.....	23	14
Switzerland.....	17	--
France.....	14	14
Germany.....	224	151
Poland.....	5	11
Czechoslovakia.....	--	6
Austria.....	42	35
Yugoslavia.....	12	15
Russia (U.S.S.R.).....	68	121
Finland.....	11	8
Italy.....	82	29
Canada-French.....	13	20
Canada-Other.....	547	606
All other countries...	126	150
Totals	1,777	1,610
Percent foreign-born	8.5	4.1

Source: U.S. Census, Population.Table 5.- Employment of the Population
Chelan County, 1950.

Types of Employment	Male Workers	Female Workers	Total Workers	% of Workers
<u>Total employed workers</u>	10,826	3,466	14,292	
Agriculture.....	2,937	151	3,088	21.6
Forestry and fisheries.....	67	7	74	.6
Mining.....	358	15		2.6
Construction.....	1,185	28	1,213	8.5
Manufacturing.....	1,060	155	1,215	8.5
Transportation.....	1,002	190	1,192	7.7
Retail and wholesale stores.....	1,937	1,050	2,987	20.9
Miscellaneous services.....	1,458	1,578	3,036	21.2
Public administration (government employment).....	356	121	477	3.3
Other employment.....	466	261	727	5.1

Source: U.S. Census, Population.

Chelan County farm employment in terms of wages paid is the second highest in the state. It is exceeded only by Yakima County farm areas where over \$18,000,000 goes to hired labor each year. Agriculture ranks high in Chelan County's employment pattern. According to the 1950 Census nearly a fourth of the wage and salary earners and the self-employed are directly in agriculture. Employment in agriculture exceeded 3,000 out of the total of 14,300 employed. Hundreds of seasonal migratory harvest workers come to Chelan County each harvest season. Agricultural employment in Chelan ranks eighth highest among Washington counties in numbers of workers. Money spent for farm labor, however, ranks second highest in the state economy. Chelan farmers paid out over \$6,500,000 for hired labor during the 1954 crop year.

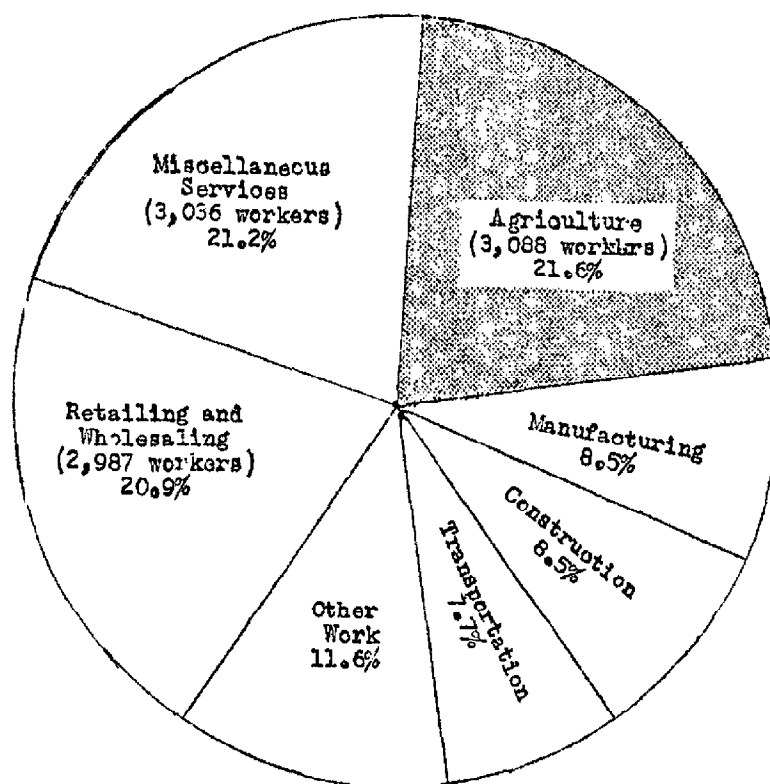


Figure 3A.- Agricultural Employment Compared With Other Employment in Chelan County, 1950.